they were making efforts to get the shares listed on BSE/NSE for resuming the trading of shares which would result in providing liquidity to the shares. The proposal for sale of equity shares of Oswal Agro Mills Ltd. has, therefore, not been found acceptable at this juncture.

(e) LIC has informed that it has not suffered any loss on account of its decision of not selling the shares of M/s Oswal Agro Mills Ltd., in view of the above mentioned initiatives of the Company. It is expected that the same would bring higher value to the share holders. LIC has further reported that selling the shares of M/s Oswal Agro Mills Ltd. at this juncture may be disadvantageous to it.

Early clearance of local cheques

967. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that RBI asked the banking industry early this year to take steps so as to clear local cheques within 24 hours and also to expeditiously clear outstation cheques;

(b) if so, the actual details of RBI directions and the reasons for which they have not so far been implemented by the banking industry; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by Government to ensure implementation of RBI directions in this regard, at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that at Magnetic Ink Character Recognition (MICR) centers, which account for over 80 percent of volume of cheques in clearing, the clearing cycle is normally 3 to 4 days for local cheques; Clearance of outstation cheques may take more time due to the necessity of their physical movement. However, High Value Clearing has been introduced at 25 centres where large value cheques (above Rs. 1 lakh) received at the branches in the central business area in the city upto 11.00 A.M. are credited to the customer's account on the same day. Non-payment or inordinate delay in the payment or collection of cheques/drafts is a deficiency in banking service entitling the customer to file a complaint to the Banking Ombudsman cencerned.

RBI, *vide* its guidelines dated November 1, 2004 has advised all Scheduled Commercial Banks to formulate a Board approved comprehensive and transparent policy covering (i) immediate credit of local/outstation cheques, (ii) time frame for collection of local/outstation cheques, and (iii) interest payment for delayed collection, taking into account their technological capabilities, systems and processes adopted for clearing arrangements and other internal arrangements for collection through correspondents and ensure wide publicity of the policy so formulated.

To enable bank customers funds to move faster, RBI has developed electronic funds transfer systems like Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system, National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) and Electronic Clearing Service (ECS) system.